

Special Meeting

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education of the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District was held on Monday evening, March 15, 2010, beginning at 6:30 p.m., in Room A106 at Northport High School, 154 Laurel Hill Road, Northport, New York, with Mr. Stephen V. Waldenburg, Jr., Chairperson, opening the meeting and presiding.

Members present: Mrs. Liz Dragone, Mr. Joe Gannon, Mr. Rob Ingraham, Mr. Tim Madden, Mrs. Donna McNaughton, Dr. Kay Hutchins Sato, Mr. Stephen V. Waldenburg, Jr., Mrs. Karen Wills

Members absent: None
One board seat vacant

Also present: Dr. Marylou McDermott, Superintendent
Mr. John Lynch, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services
Dr. Terry Bouton, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
Ms. Kathleen Molander, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Mr. Matthew Nelson, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Administration

1. President Waldenburg called the meeting to order.

Motion was made by Trustee McNaughton, seconded by Trustee Wills, to convene in Executive Session to discuss matters pertaining to contract negotiations.

Unanimously carried.

At 7:40 p.m., motion was made by Trustee Madden, seconded by Trustee Gannon, to reconvene in public session in the Auditorium at Northport High School.

Unanimously carried

Public attendance: There were approximately 900 persons present.

2. Mr. Waldenburg led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance; and
3. Pointed out the emergency exits.
4. SPECIAL REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT
 - 4.1 Accomplishments of Staff and Students

4.1.1 Mr. Izzet Mergen, Director of Music Education K-12, introduced the Music Department Student of the Month, Isabel Epstein. Mr. Mergen stated that Isabel began studying violin at age five and at age seven was admitted to the Pulaski Road Elementary orchestra as the youngest member. Mr. Mergen noted that Isabel was awarded excellence in music by the East Northport Middle School music department and since age eleven she has received all A+ grades on NYSSMA level VI violin solos, the most difficult level solo. Isabel has performed at Carnegie Hall, Manhattan School of Music and Queens College. In addition to violin, Isabel taught herself to sing, play guitar, piano, bass and drums, and has written original music on voice and guitar. Mr. Mergen stated that in her sophomore year Isabel began teaching violin to elementary, middle and high school students. Isabel just founded a charity called Girl Saves World and hopes to one day set up music schools in impoverished nations. Mr. Mergen noted that Isabel is finishing composing the third movement of her first symphony which will be premiered at the Northport High School Symphony Orchestra spring concert on Thursday, May 13th.

President Waldenburg and Superintendent McDermott congratulated Isabel on her fine accomplishments and presented her with a commendation from the Board.

5. DISCUSSION OF SUPERINTENDENT'S PROPOSED 2010-2011 BUDGET

Dr. Marylou McDermott, Superintendent, asked Ms. Kathleen Molander, Assistant Superintendent for Business, to explain the District's fund balance and reserves.

Ms. Molander reviewed the District's Fund Balance, Reserved Fund Balance, Unreserved Fund Balance, Designated Unreserved Fund Balance and Undesignated Unreserved Fund Balance. Ms. Molander stated that reserves are separate accounts established by a school district to finance the cost of various objects or purposes. The District may only use certain reserves authorized by Education Law and General Municipal Law, a separate accounting is required for each reserve, and interest earned accrues to each reserve fund and becomes part of the reserve fund balance. Ms. Molander noted that once money is reserved it cannot be used for any other purpose than that specified by law. The Capital Reserve Fund pays the cost of any object or purpose for which bonds may be issued, i.e. facility construction, equipment, purchase of school buses. The Insurance Reserve Fund is to fund certain uninsured losses, claims or judgments. The Workers' Compensation Reserve is for payment of compensation benefits or for payment of expenses or administering a self-insurance program. The Unemployment Insurance Reserve is to reimburse the State Unemployment Insurance Fund for payments made to claimants. The Employee Benefits Accrued Liability Reserve pays for any accrued "employee benefit" due an employee upon termination of employee services. The Encumbrance Reserve permits the rollover of bona fide outstanding encumbrances from one fiscal year to the next fiscal year. The Designated Unreserved Fund Balance is the portion of the unreserved fund balance that has been designated for a specific purpose and the amount of fund balance designated to reduce the tax levy. The Undesignated Unreserved Fund Balance is the difference between the total fund balance and the portion that is reserved and designated. State law governs the percentage that a School District may retain in their undesignated unreserved fund balance and the current percentage permitted by law is 4%. The District's undesignated unreserved fund balance is 3.99% of the 2009-2010 budget. New York State Government Finance Officers' Association recommends aiming for an unreserved fund balance of between 5% and 15% of total expenditures. Ms. Molander reviewed the importance of the undesignated unreserved fund balance and the warning signs of fiscal stress.

There was a discussion regarding the District's fund balance and reserves.

Dr. McDermott asked Dr. Terry Bouton, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources to review the staffing changes.

Dr. Bouton stated that the salaries of the 12.4 fte retirees not being replaced have been removed from their projected codes. The salaries of the 9.0 fte retirees being replaced have been reduced and appear in the salary code of the location where the retiree was coded next year. The salaries of employees who might be excessed have been removed from the location codes where they were coded next year. Dr. Bouton stated that teachers who received letters equaled 40.65 fte with an additional 2.0 fte positions not being filled. Dr. Bouton also stated that 23 support staff positions received letters.

5.1 Budget Programs to be reviewed:

- 0100 Kindergarten Core Education
- 0200 1st – 5th Grade Core Education

Mr. Jeffrey Haubrich, Pulaski Road Elementary School Principal, stated that all the elementary principals looked very closely at the numbers and tried to be equitable across the schools.

Mr. Matt Nelson, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Administration, stated that the textbook codes were combined into one code.

0300 6th Grade Core Education
0400 English Education (including Theater Arts)

In response to a question, Dr. Bouton stated that the reduction in fte will have an impact on the electives offered. Ms. Patricia Schmitt, English Department Chairperson, stated that there is only one elective in the English Department that does not fulfill the state's requirement. Trustee Ingraham inquired about the possibility of offering electives on alternate years to save costs and still offer students a choice.

There was a long discussion between the Board, community members and students. Many students were concerned about the proposed excessing of teachers and the impact on class size and electives that are offered to students. Several students were concerned over the purchase of SmartBoards. One student presented a proposal to the Board regarding energy efficiency and methods of increasing revenue. There was a suggestion that the Board considering increase the budget to a 3 or 4% tax rate increase.

Several Board members stated that with the current economic downturn they have heard from many community residents concerning the budget and what can be afforded by all taxpayers.

Several community members suggested that the department chairpersons teach a class.

Discussions ensued regarding mandated programs, pensions and teacher employee retirement funds, the proposed teacher pay freeze, and fees for summer programs.

Several community members requested that the budget book be simplified so that residents would be able to understand it.

0500 Social Studies Education
0501 Law Education

In response to a question, Mr. Andrew Manzo, Social Studies Department Chairperson, stated that the state requires four years of Social Studies so there is not much room for flexibility in terms of electives. Mr. Manzo stated that courses may not run in terms of student interest. Mr. Manzo also noted that class size could potentially increase.

0600 Mathematics Education

In response to a question, Mr. Daniel Drance, Mathematics Department Chairperson, stated that there could be an increase in class size but there would be no significant impact to the program with the proposed reductions.

There was a discussion regarding field trips, savings in budget codes, and corrections to the budget book on the District's website.

0700 Science Education (including Outdoor Education)

In response to a question, Mr. William Esner, Science Department Chairperson, stated that there would be a minimal impact to the science department with the proposed cuts.

0800 World Languages (including Global Communications)

In response to a question, Ms. Jennifer Nesfield, World Languages Department Chairperson, stated that there might be a slight increase in class size with the proposed cuts. Ms. Nesfield noted that there are very few electives in the World Languages Department.

At 11:00 p.m., motion was made by Trustee Sato, seconded by Trustee Wills to extend the meeting.

Unanimously carried.

- 0900 Reading
- 1000 AIS/Compensatory Learning (including Elementary Summer School)

There was a discussion regarding the proposed changes to the process used to evaluate students for the program by using the Northwestern Evaluation Association, the adverse impact on students with the elimination of the elementary summer school, workshops on strategies parents could use at home, and the impact on the programs and services in-district with the proposed reductions.

- 1100 Investigate Program

Dr. McDermott noted that the reduction of .5 fte was assigned to the middle schools and that the schedules of the other two investigate teachers will be maximized so they can deliver the program at the middle schools.

- 1200 English as a Second Language
- 1300 Library/Media Services

Mr. Nelson noted that one library medial specialist will be replaced and they are hoping to make some economies to provide technology integration.

- 1400 Physical Education
 - 1401 Boys Physical Education
 - 1402 Girls Physical Education

Mr. Drew Cronin, Athletic Director, stated that with reallocation of staff from one building to another there will be minimal impact on students.

- 1500 Extracurricular Activities
 - 1501 Boys Athletics
 - 1502 Girls Athletics
 - 1503 Boys Intramurals
 - 1504 Girls Intramurals
 - 1505 Co-Curricular Activities

Mr. Cronin stated that there will be a significant impact on students with the proposed cuts to the extracurricular activities.

There was a discussion regarding the impact of reductions to co-curricular activities on the students.

- 1600 Health Education

Mr. Lynch, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services, stated that there would be a major impact on the health education program with the proposed cuts. Mr. Lynch stated that there are two elementary health educators and it is not a mandated curriculum. The elementary health education program will be infused in the classroom. The 9th and 10th grade health infusion program will be eliminated.

- 1700 Family & Consumer Sciences

There was a discussion regarding the proposed cuts to Family & Consumer Sciences and the impact upon the students.

1800 Technology Education

Mr. Matt Nelson stated that all the programs offered in technology are valuable and it will be a very hard decision making cuts to the programs.

1900 Business Education

In response to a question, Mr. Christopher Donarummo, High School Assistant Principal, stated that there are proposed cuts to full year courses and the possibility of only having a few electives in addition to the full year courses.

2000 Art Education (including Art & Music Festival)

Dr. Bouton stated that there would be a reduction of 5.8 fte to the art department. Dr. Bouton noted that there are a tremendous amount of electives offered in art and there is a low minimum for the courses.

Several students addressed the Board and stated their concerns about the proposed eliminations in the art department. Many students stated that Northport has a unique and amazing art department and that the proposed cuts will drastically affect the program.

2100 Music Education

- 2102 Summer Music Program
- 2103 Summer Music Clinic

Many students and community residents addressed the Board and urged them to reconsider the proposed cuts to the music program. Several people stated that Northport's music program has the reputation of being one of the country's superior music departments.

Dr. McDermott stated that the administrators are working very hard to restore as much as they possibly can.

Motion was made by Trustee Wills, seconded by Trustee Sato, to address the remaining budget line items at the next meeting and to vote on the business items on the agenda.

Unanimously carried.

Budget line items 2200-3300 will be added to the agenda for the March 22, 2010 Special Meeting.

Motion was made by Trustee Sato, seconded by Trustee Wills, to approve all items under 6.1 and 6.2.

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT, GENERAL - FOR BOARD ACTION

6.1 Personnel Schedules, each dated March 15, 2010, and each attached and made part of the official minutes:

- 6.1.1 Schedule A - Certified Staff
- 6.1.2 Schedule C - Salary Transfers

6.2 Receiving for a second reading and adopting the following policies:

- 6.2.1 Policy #6690 – “Audit Committee”
- 6.2.2 Policy #2250 – “Board Committees” (new numbering system – old

number 8130)

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT, FINANCIAL - FOR BOARD ACTION
8. NEW BUSINESS

There being no further business to discuss at this time, motion was made by Trustee Sato, seconded by Trustee Wills, to adjourn the special meeting.

At 1:25 a.m., the Chair declared the meeting adjourned.

Beth M. Nystrom
District Clerk

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